

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING POLICY

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POLICY STATEMENT:

Conestoga is committed to offering programs that meet student and employer needs. To this end, appropriate programs will include a work-integrated learning (WIL) or experiential learning (EL) component. This policy ensures consistency and quality in the design, development, implementation, and review of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in Conestoga's programs. Conestoga will prioritize risk management practices in WIL to obtain the key strategic objectives of WIL and strive to continuously improve the quality of programs and students' experiences with WIL.

POLICY ELABORATION:

Work-integrated learning, including co-operative education, professional practice/field placements and other opportunities for students to work with third party organizations (as defined by Appendix A: EL/WIL Typology) are critical elements of academic programming at Conestoga. These elements are carefully considered throughout the program life cycle and throughout their operation.

Program Life Cycle:

Co-operative education and work integrated learning experiences are embedded into programs of study with intention to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved. WIL experiences are designed and reviewed to be in alignment with co-operative education criteria and WIL guidelines. These goals are achieved through Co-op, Career and Work-Integrated Learning (CCWIL) representation and participation in:

- program development through the Program Planning and Review Committee (PPRC), and degree Program Development Advisory Committees (PDACs);
- program review and quality initiatives such as the Annual Program Reflections (APRs), Major Program Reviews (MPRs), and Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) college degree consent renewal processes, and program monitoring initiatives such as relevant Program Advisory Committees (PACs); and
- other WIL/EL data monitoring through engagement in strategic mandate agreement metrics.

Risk Management:

To support the Conestoga Enterprise Risk Management framework and a risk aware culture, the management of key risk related to WIL is of paramount importance to Conestoga; The risk management process includes identifying, assessing, managing, and monitoring risks which could cause adverse impacts from an operational, financial, reputational, safety and/or student experience standpoint. To support the risk management process, CCWIL will monitor risks and insurance requirements of selected employers, affiliation agreements, and other waivers and acknowledgements, prepare students to safely engage in WIL activities, and monitor pre-placement requirements and health and safety compliance. Key WIL risks that are deemed potentially severe to stakeholders, and the Conestoga WIL and/or experimental learning processes, will be brought forward by the CCWIL team to the risk management team for review.

Quality Improvement:

Continuous quality improvement is a value and process applied to WIL programs and students' WIL experiences. Conestoga will support compliance with CEWIL Canada accreditation standards and meeting Strategic Mandate Agreement targets. CCWIL will maintain clear definitions of WIL and EL (Appendix A), assure effective and efficient operation of WIL programs, maintain excellent service and support for students participating in WIL and enhance relationships with employers and host organizations who provide WIL experiences.

Tools to be used to establish WIL components:

Appendix B: Considerations for Work-Integrated Learning in Program Development outlines criteria/process for considering appropriate WIL components and references resources that support WIL development.

Developing, operationalizing, and evaluating WIL primarily resides within the CCWIL department. Schools will collaborate with CCWIL in partnership with Institutional Research, Program Quality Assurance, Degree Quality, and Curriculum departments when considering, proposing, implementing, and modifying WIL experiences. CCWIL works in cooperation with program areas to ensure that the WIL experience is relevant and valuable for participating students and meets program and course level learning outcomes.

Conestoga College as a Co-op Employer

All co-op work term positions at Conestoga (paid and unpaid) must be approved by Human Resources.

Program Services Fee (Co-operative Education Fee)

Students in all co-op programs, including mandatory, optional and alternative, such as guided career management, will pay a non-refundable fee to offset costs involved with the services and supports that are provided.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Conestoga programs with a WIL component.

DEFINITIONS:

Annual Program Reflection (APR)

An institutionally established quality review process that all programs are required to complete annually. The process is facilitated through an online system where program teams document their review and reflection on aspects of the program and the last academic year; and create an action plan for the upcoming year.

Co-operative Education

Formally integrate a student's academic studies with work experience involving participating employers. A co-op program generally begins and ends with a study term; work and study periods typically alternate in a pre-determined sequence. Co-op is generally paid.

Co-operative Education, Career Services and Work-Integrated Learning (CCWIL)

The group of departments responsible for the overall operationalization of WIL at Conestoga

Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada

The leading national association for co-op and work-integrated learning and accrediting body for co-operative education in Canada

Co-op Work Term

Co-operative Work Term provides experience in a workplace setting related to the student's field of study. Co-op generally consists of alternating academic terms and paid work terms. Students receive academic credit for work terms.

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)

ERM is a framework that is part of the overall management and stewardship of the organization by the Conestoga Board of Governors and its employees. ERM is applied in a strategy setting, and includes methods and processes designed to identify, assess, manage, monitor and report on risks.

Experiential Learning (EL)

See Venn Diagram Experiential Learning/WIL Typology for definitions (Appendix A).

Field Placement and/or Professional Practice

Field/Professional Practice Placements provide students with an intensive, hands-on practical experience in a setting relevant to their subject of study. Students are supervised by the employer partner or faculty preceptor. Normally, field/professional practice placements are unpaid.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are interrelated and, as a result, should be viewed as a comprehensive whole rather than in isolation. Learning outcomes describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program of study has been achieved and verified. Learning outcomes can also be referred to as graduate attributes, i.e., the knowledge, values and skills possessed and demonstrated by graduates.

Major Program Review (MPR)

An institutionally established quality improvement framework that all programs are required to undergo every 5-7 years. The process facilitates the collection of data and stakeholder feedback to inform the strategic assessment (program fit, viability, and relevance). The process results in a plan for update and renewal to support program and student success.

Post-Secondary Education Quality Assurance Board (PEQAB)

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board is an arms-length advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario on applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Post- secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.

Program Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Program Advisory Committee provides advice on academic program development, review and relevance, changes/trends in business and industry affecting programs, students and graduates, technological implications of changes/trends, employment prospects etc. Refer to PAC Guidelines for membership and terms of reference.

Program Development Advisory Committee (PDAC)

The Program Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) provides advice and support for all new programs of study, including degree program of study development, in accordance with Ministry policy.

Program of Study

A planned and coordinated selection of courses delivered to an identified student body leading to a certificate, diploma, degree, or other credential awarded by the Conestoga Board of Governors upon successful conclusion.

Program Planning and Review Committee (PPRC)

The program planning and review committee is a standing committee comprised of representatives from each department and school. The committee ensures that curriculum development and review are consistent with approved processes.

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

See Venn Diagram Experiential Learning/WIL Typology for definitions (Appendix A).

REFERENCES:

[Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning \(CEWIL\) Canada Accreditation Standards and Rationale.](#)

[Guidelines for Workplace Insurance for Postsecondary Students of Publicly Assisted Institutions on Unpaid Work Placements.](#) (Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development July 2017)

Ministry of Colleges and Universities, SMA3 Reporting Framework, Instructions for Completing the Graduate Data Record – Experiential Learning

[PEQAB Manual for Ontario Colleges, 2019.](#)

[Questions and Answers Postsecondary Student Unpaid Work Placement Workplace Insurance Coverage for Ontario University and College Students.](#)

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Enterprise Risk Management Policy

On-Campus Student Hiring Policy

On-Campus Student Hiring Procedure

Program Development Procedure

Program Review Procedure

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: [EL/WIL Typology](#)

Appendix B: [Considerations for Work-Integrated Learning.](#)

REVISION LOG:

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
Aug. 10, 2009	Academic Forum - Approved
Sept. 30, 2009	Policy and Procedure Committee - Approved
Oct. 21, 2009	Academic Coordinating Committee - Approved
May 28, 2014	Executive Dean, Academic Administration – Approved Addition of <i>Conestoga College as a Co-op Employer</i>
August 30, 2016	Policy and Procedure Committee – Approved
September 21, 2016	Academic Coordinating Committee – Approved
October 5, 2022	Academic Forum
December 6, 2022	Academic Coordinating Committee